



THE HAWKS NEST

December 2020

VALLEY RIDGE ACADEMY

Letter from our Principal

Hello VRA Families,

Congratulations to 5th grader **DEEKSHA HARIHARAN** and 6th grader **TIM GORELIK** for winning the 2020-2021 VRA Spelling Bee for elementary and middle school respectively. Deeksha and Tim will represent Valley Ridge Academy at the St. Johns County Bee on Wednesday, January 13th, 2021! Everyone at VRA is proud of your accomplishment and rooting you on!

Thank you to everyone for participating in the Annual VRA PTO Fun Run. Even though the structure of the Fun Run was different this year with students doing the DanceFit Challenge in their classrooms, the outpouring of support from the community was overwhelming. The students had a great time dancing and celebrating throughout the day on November 20th and it was wonderful way to go into the Thanksgiving holiday.

One of the unique challenges this year has been having to deal with the quarantining of individuals due to being a contact with a positive COVID case. The school district continues to work with the CDC and the Florida Department of Health (DOH) on ensuring all guidelines are followed and that we continue to adapt to an ever-changing situation. The following is the most up-to-date information related to the length quarantine and the process for returning.

ASYMPTOMATIC CLOSE CONTACTS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

The CDC and the Florida DOH continue to recommend quarantine for 14 days from the date of exposure. However, there is new guidance that allows for a close contact to return to school earlier. There are two options that may allow the close contact to return to school/work before the full 14-day quarantine period has been met:

1. The quarantine period may be shortened to 10 days from last exposure to the positive case if daily symptom monitoring indicates the close contact remains symptom free. The contact can return to school or work on Day 11. **HOWEVER**, it is extremely important that the contact continues daily monitoring for signs/symptoms through 14 days, as well as, practice social distancing, always wears a mask, and washes hands frequently. If signs/symptoms develop at any point, the contact should immediately isolate, seek medical care, and call the DOH.
2. The quarantine may be shortened to as few as 7 days if a negative PCR test result is obtained on day 6 or later from exposure to the positive case. A PCR test is required and a rapid antigen test **CANNOT** be substituted. The test must be collected on day 6 or after, and if it is negative, the contact can return on Day 8 of quarantine, if he or she remains symptom free. **HOWEVER**, it is extremely important that the contact continues



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FAQs:

DO I HAVE TO GET MY CHILD TESTED?

No, assuming your child remains symptom-free, he or she does not need a negative test to return to school on Day 11. If they develop symptoms you should seek medical care and call the Health Department.

HOW DO I GET PCR TESTING?

- You can obtain PCR testing through your medical provider.
- You can obtain PCR testing at a public testing site.
- REMEMBER: the rapid antigen test is not accepted, it must be a PCR test.
- If your child develops symptoms, seek medical care and call the DOH.
- Make sure results can be provided within 24 to 48 hours. If the results are likely to take longer than 48 hours, it may be better to quarantine through day 10 and return to school on day 11, if no symptoms. CHILDREN WITH A KNOWN PENDING TEST RESULT SHOULD NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL.

IF I GET A NEGATIVE PCR TEST RESULT, OBTAINED ON OR AFTER DAY 6 FOLLOWING EXPOSURE, WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?

Call the DOH to check if the result has been reported electronically in their system. If the result is reported, they will let the school know that your child may return, assuming they remain asymptomatic. If you have been notified that the result is negative but it has not yet shown up in the DOH system, you will need to provide a copy of the lab directly to the DOH. NOTE: Please DO NOT fax or drop off copies of labs without first contacting the DOH to make appropriate arrangements.

Students will be dismissed one hour early on December 18th at 1:45 pm. Winter break is from December 19th – January 3rd. Students and staff return to campus on January 4th. We hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday season and a safe and happy New Year!

Sandra McMandon

VRA Spelling Bee



We had 7 Spelling Bee classroom finalists that participated in the 5th grade Spelling Bee last Monday:

Jake Williams, Tanner Burger, Deeksha Hariharan, Evelina Susak, Summer Nichols, Adam Yeaton, and Mason Dunn.

We are proud of our VRA students for always giving their best.

Congratulations to the Elementary and Middle School Spelling Bee Winners from VRA:



DEEKSHA HARIHARAN



TIMOTHY GORELIK

The biggest reward for a thing well done is to have done it - Voltaire



Staff Appreciation

Our wonderful PTO and VRA families continue their tradition of making school a sweeter place to work at. For the month of November, they delivered delicious honey treats to teachers and staff members.

You're awesome for thinking of us!



Character Counts! Celebrations

K-8 classrooms/homerooms celebrated Character Counts! on Friday, December 4th. One student from each class was nominated for demonstrating the pillar of



Do your share to make your home, school, community and greater world better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment • Volunteer

Each nominee received a certificate, VRA magnet, and a bag full of fun rewards!

We applaud our kids of character!

Kindergarten –

Sam Updike, Katherine Freeman, Polina Sribniak, Ada LaMontagne, Olivia Young, Brianne Stark, and Terrance McCall.

First grade –

Eli Gavitt, Ava Maddox, Vivian Dunn, Noah Maldonado, William Jones, Tyler Davidson, Aaruv Trikha, and Lyric Starks.

Second grade -

Ethan Philips, Camden Swindle, Baylor Smith, Jayden Ahmad, Presley Gruver, Mia Schallick, Arlie Whitlow, and Evan Horn.

Third grade –

Jiya Chainani, Madelynn Matvey, Corson Camp, Thomas Fila, Ava Spellman, and Riley Riettie.

Fourth grade –

Carlee Hulse, Maira Mehmedinovic, Riley Gebauer, Jocelyn Hohner, Wesley Marino, Cody Belizaire, and Kyra Horn.

Fifth grade –

Carly Young, William Frank, Elijah Trinidad, Katelyn Bourke, Finn Bayliss, Yair Claros, Mia Aramayo, and Kacie Minx.

Middle School –

Eric Herbst, Olivia Sykes, Samantha Ilao, Ben Nelson, Emma Wilson, Dorian Vitetta, AnnaKat Long, Juliet Akyol, Jaydin Dang, Alison Lechtrecker, Kasey Kellezi, Anatoli Monsalve, Jocelyn Chambers, Vincent Larizza, Chase Mumford, Reagan Manning, Taylor Willis, Pablo Solis, and Sophia Matt.



VRA celebrates the pillar of **RESPECT** during the month of January.

VRA Students of Character

We are proud of you!



VRA Students of Character

Well done Hawks!



Counselors' Corner

Ms. MacNaught will be going into 6-8th grade classes this month to talk about **Human trafficking**.

Objectives:

- Students will learn about control and manipulation that can result from an imbalance of power. Students will be aware of the potential dangers of being controlled by others as these tactics can be used by human traffickers.
- Students will understand that human trafficking can occur anywhere and to anyone, and it is even likely happening in their own community.
- Students will learn the definition and risks of human trafficking.
- Students will be introduced to a scenario that demonstrates risky situations and red flags shown by a teen in a vulnerable position.
- Students will learn how traffickers maintain control and the impact of trauma bonds will be reviewed.
- Students will learn methods of reporting suspected or actual human trafficking.
- Students will review how to advocate for themselves and others.

Ms. MacNaught will also be talking to 7-8th grade students about **Dating Violence**.

Per state statute and school board policy 5.26, the health curriculum for students in grades 7th through 12th shall include dating violence and abuse. The dating violence and abuse component shall include, but is not limited to the definition of dating violence and abuse, the warning signs of dating violence and abusive behavior, the characteristics of healthy relationships, measures to prevent and stop dating violence and abuse, and community resources available to victims of dating violence and abuse.



High School Information

Registration Timeline for Career and Technical Education (CTE) of St. Johns County

Application submission deadline for students currently enrolled in a St. Johns County public school:

February 5th, 2021, by 5:00 pm

Timeline

Jan. 5th - Middle School Blitz held at each Middle School.

Jan. 8th - Online application OPENS at 8:00 am for newly applying 5th, 8th and 9th grade students. View instructions showing how to apply.

Jan. 12th - High School Showcase virtual event from 3:30 – 7:00 pm.

Jan. 11th - Jan. 29th - Academy Nights (see schedule below)

Jan. 29th – Auditions:

- St. Johns County Center for the Arts auditions at St. Augustine High School.
- Murray Middle School Arts auditions will be held at Murray Middle School. Please bring your printed audition form.

Feb. 5th - Registration deadline, online – Registration will be closed at 5:00 pm.

May 1st - Last day for late applications.

Jun. 1st - Last day to apply for review.

Jul. 1st - All out of zone placement decisions will be finalized.

High School Showcase

All parents and students are invited to attend the annual High School Showcase on Thursday, January 12th, 2021. This year's event will be held virtually from 3:30 – 7:00 pm. Learn about the High School Programs of Choice and meet representatives from each High School.

Academy Nights

Each high school will host an informational 2021 Academy Night. All parents interested in attending one of the academies should make plans to attend these events. Each Academy Night will begin at 6:00 pm, except for St. Johns Technical High School which will begin at 5:30 pm.

Jan. 14th - St. Johns Technical High School from 5:30 – 6:30 pm.

Jan. 19th - St. Augustine High School – ALL St. Johns County Center for the Arts and Murray Middle School requests must apply by January 28, 2021. (Auditions at St. Augustine High School and Murray Middle School will occur on Jan. 29th, 2021) 6:00 – 7:30 pm.

Jan. 21st - Creekside High School from 6:00 – 7:30 pm.

Jan. 25th - Bartram Trail High School from 6:00 – 7:30 pm.

Jan. 26th - Ponte Vedra High School from 6:00 – 7:30 pm.

High School Information (cont.)

Jan. 27th - Pedro Menendez High School
from 6:00 – 7:30 pm.

Jan. 28th - Allen D. Nease High School
from 6:00 – 7:30 pm.

Any SJCS D resident who is moving a student from home school, virtual school or private school may apply for an academy by pre-registering for school on-line at the SJCS D website and selecting to also apply for a Program of Choice. All pre-registrations need to be completed online by the end of the school day February 5th.

If you should have any questions,

please feel free to contact the Career & Technical Education Department at (904) 547-4870.

Useful links:

Timeline & High School Showcase Info:

<https://cte.stjohns.k12.fl.us/timeline/>

How to Apply:

https://cte.stjohns.k12.fl.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Selecting_Program_of_Choice_in_HAC_Student_No_Pics.pdf

Application Process:

<https://cte.stjohns.k12.fl.us/join/>

